

PEOPLE & THINGS *By ATTICUS*

TRULY this is the Queen's year! With only a fortnight of the flat-racing season to go Her Majesty is bound to be the year's biggest winner on the British turf. Sir Victor Sassoon, the runner-up, now at last admits defeat.

The figures to date show how close the struggle has been:

The Queen £62,211
Sir Victor Sassoon £58,522

The whole country will be delighted that Her Majesty has added racing to her other conquests. But it must not be imagined that her winnings are a net profit. Her Majesty has between twenty-five and thirty horses in training, each of which costs on the average about £1,000 a year; and there are many other expenses for a successful owner.

Incidentally, I do not know whether any official plans have been made to celebrate the tenth anniversary of the wedding of the Queen and the Duke of Edinburgh on November 20, but it is to be hoped that as a people we shall be allowed to express our affection and our pride on that happy day. If in these harsh days we cannot afford to stop work then let us have the celebration at night when the Queen and her Consort could drive through the illuminated streets of London.

Leadership

HOW heavy is the strain of high political office? I posed that question to myself after a talk with the Prime Minister a few days ago. During the last few months he has been taking aeroplanes as if they were taxicabs. The problem of Russia is always with him, and trade-union leaders can be relied upon to supply noises off at any point in the drama. Well might he echo the words of David Lloyd George who said that during his Premiership a day with only one crisis was like a day off.

Part of 'Mr. Macmillan's strength is that like a good commander-in-chief he is responsible for Government strategy and his Ministers are responsible for tactics. Incidentally, I thought that Mr. Peter Thorneycroft received an

ungenerous Press after his winding-up speech in the two-day economic debate. I was fortunate enough to hear him and thought that the Chancellor knocked his opponents all round the ring. But these are grudging, grumbling days.

Benevolent 'Bumps'

THE Oxford Historic Buildings Appeal is undoubtedly doing well so far. The cause is a noble one, but the success also owes much to the careful and skilled organisation of the Appeal,



Decaying stone in this gable of University College, Oxford, is in so dangerous a state that even with the top of the cornice removed the masonry has to be tied with a steel rope.

aided by the Oxford Society, which is coming into its own as the benevolent league of alumni that its founders like Lionel Curtis foresaw.

Lord Bridges, the chairman of the Appeal, is a rock of good sense, tact and shrewdness; flanked by the expert Rector of Lincoln and the witty Warden of Wadham, he makes a formidable general in the fight for the next million.

At a Press party last week he declined to say which college topped the list in terms of the proportion of its graduate members who had subscribed. I respect his discretion, but I can't help thinking that if old rivalries like those of Balliol and Trinity were enlisted, and if THE SUNDAY TIMES were to publish a table of "bumps" from

month to month, like Torpids and Eights, a great number of purse-strings might be opened.

Two Giants

IT is a pity that there was no record of the meeting last Thursday night of two giants in different worlds of endeavour. One was Mr. Cecil B. DeMille, the other Sir Winston Churchill. I sat next to Mr. DeMille next day at luncheon and it seems that although Sir Winston was relaxing in bed when he entertained the prodigious producer from Hollywood the conversation was lively.

If Churchill the immortal had not been drawn into politics he would surely have made a heroic and extravagant director of films. The mighty trek of the Jews, led by Moses, would have fired his imagination as a historian and he would have been fascinated with the problems of transporting a people to a destination and a destiny which were both unknown.

Through the courtesy of Mr. DeMille I was given a private view of 'The Ten Commandments'. It is truly colossal and must have cost a vast fortune to produce. But as so often happens there is the vexed if illogical problem of the American voice. It seems to us perfectly natural that on the screen Napoleon should speak to Josephine in English, but if they speak in American accents we feel it to be a complete and jarring anachronism.

Although most of the American actors in 'Mr. DeMille's new film achieve a reasonable compromise between English and American, the young children give the impression that they have come direct from New York or even Brooklyn. The film as a whole is in keeping with the genuine idealism of Mr. DeMille, who has declared his intention of taking no money from the box-office returns.

Black Rod

WHAT, I wonder, does Black Rod, with his disciplinary duties in the House of Lords, think of the prospect of having women members as well as women visitors to keep his official eye on? Within a few days Sir Brian Horrocks will go to the Bar of the House of Commons and, with dignity, plus a subtle air of traditional superiority, will summon Her Majesty's faithful Commons to come to the House of Lords where the Queen will be waiting to open the new Parliamentary session. His task will be performed with that delicate blending of deference and superiority which are essential to the Gentleman Usher of the Black Rod when dealing with Commoners.

But Sir Brian is no shadowy figure. THE SUNDAY TIMES and television have made him known to us all. With little or no previous experience of the medium he captured the imagination of the television public by his graphic accounts of world-war campaigns. No one could have done it so well.

Thousands of SUNDAY TIMES readers, including myself, now understand the real character of the desert battles which rocketed General Montgomery to immortal fame and proved the beginning of the design for victory. But in spite of all he tells us about the stress of battle and the informality of the Eighth Army, in spite of the evidence of his own M.C. and D.S.O. I am convinced that throughout two wars Brian Horrocks remained immaculate.

V.C., M.P.

I HAVE been reading a coming book, "Before the Dawn," which carries us a step further in our study of the anatomy of valour. Brigadier Sir John Smyth, the author, has six letters after his name: V.C. M.C. and M.P. and you will agree that valour plays its part in all of them. In fact one of our leading Ministers said to me not long ago: "I am always terrified when I get up to speak at the despatch box."

Sir John Smyth would make a perfect parson. His smile is gentle, his voice is soft, and there is a charming sense of

deference which unintentionally flatters people when they meet him. Yet he won the V.C. in the 1914-18 war in sheer cold blood, when he took on a lone sacrifice task with multitudinous odds against him. It is an anticlimax to recall that for years he was a linesman at Wimbledon—but perhaps that requires courage too.

Man on the Spot

DR. TOM MARGERISON, our scientific correspondent, whose despatch from Russia appears on Page 1, went to Moscow to cover the Sputnik saga for us and found himself plunged into the middle of the Zhukov story. His presence makes nonsense of a daily newspaper's claim to have the only British newspaper reporter on the spot. Apart from a mild grumble about the horrors of Russian telephones, he has tackled the job with resilience and cheerfulness. But then he has an extraordinary reputation for versatility. At Sheffield he played rugby and swam for the university, produced plays and operas, edited the magazine, started a newspaper, broadcast and made a number of amateur films. Between these activities he managed to fit in a good B.Sc. and a thesis on magnetism that earned him his Ph.D.

Now, as Science Editor of that flourishing weekly, the "New Scientist," and, still only 33 years old, he is doing just the job he has always set his heart on. But he sometimes has a pang of remorse when he remembers how short the country is of pure scientists.

Diplomatic Privilege

A FRIEND of mine, surveying with me the huge block of American Embassy buildings in Grosvenor Square, wondered how much the local authority extracted from the American Ambassador in rates. "Nothing," I said oracularly: "The Ambassador is no more subject to local rates than he is to British taxation." My friend was inecaciously enough to bet—and is now the poorer for the price of a drink.

But the position, I find, is not quite so simple as I had supposed. Though foreign envoys are not specifically free from taxes or rates by any particular statute, they are immune from being sued for debt. There is, therefore, no sanction behind a demand for payment. But this does not necessarily mean that the local authority goes without its rates. There is in many cases a reciprocal arrangement by which each Government concerned pays the rates of the embassy to which it is host.

"And if there is no such arrangement?" I asked my informant.

"Well, then we have to rely on our powers of persuasion."

"And does persuasion generally succeed?"

To which the diplomatic reply was "Sometimes they pay and sometimes they don't." For the sake of peace and amity we shall not carry the subject any further.

People and Words

House of Lords reform has been rather like a slow-motion film of a prima ballerina—not marked by agility or grace, but by languid exhibition and elephantine deliberations.—VISCOUNT SASSON.

There's nothing so expensive as living with the rich.

—MR. MAURICE BOWRA, Warden of Wadham.

The Communist Party never makes a compromise unless it is in its ultimate favour.

—MARSHAL BULGANIN.

Most of the troubles of the world date from the time that women were given the vote, but I treat that as coincidence rather than as consequence.—THE EARL OF HOME.

A woman who cannot earn £2 a week these days must be terribly dull.—MR. JUSTICE ROXBOROUGH.

Everyone expects me to be sent mental about Alexandra Palace. The truth is I loathed the dump.—MR. CECIL MADDEN.

Rock 'n' roll is sung, played, and written for the most part by cretinous goons... and manage to be the martial music of every side-burned delinquent on the face of the earth.—MR. FRANK SINATRA.